

# Portsmouth College

## Sixth form college

<b>Inspection dates</b>		12-15 March 2013
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This provider is good because:

- Strong leadership and management have ensured sustained improvements in the proportion of students who successfully complete their courses.
- Outcomes for learners have improved well since the last inspection and are now good.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good.
- The high quality support from all staff effectively helps students to become confident and independent learners.
- Students' progress is monitored very closely, and prompt and effective interventions keep students on track to succeed.
- Its strong and well-established partnerships bring significant benefits to the local community.
- It provides a welcoming, friendly and inclusive environment where staff and students work well together.

#### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Not enough lessons provide outstanding teaching, learning and assessment.
- Success rates and students' progress on a minority of courses remain below national averages.
- Performance management and self-assessment have yet to improve teaching and learning consistently across the whole college.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the management of teachers' performance by linking it more closely to the outcomes from lesson observations; and make sure that these outcomes also inform the staff development programme. Use these strengthened systems to focus on, and improve, the quality of teaching in the remaining areas of underperformance in the college.
- Monitor closely the learning targets that staff set for students; ensure that they are consistently setting specific, measurable and suitably challenging targets so that all students may reach their full potential.
- Provide further staff development to help teachers to promote equality and diversity well in their lessons, so that students develop a wider and deeper understanding of these issues. Use the lesson observation system more effectively to monitor how this important aspect of teaching and learning is being developed in lessons.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
------------------------------	------

- Outcomes for learners have improved well since the last inspection and are now good. The college has made good progress in improving the proportion of students who successfully complete their courses. On many courses, success rates are around or above national averages and sometimes they are well above. Students' attendance has improved well over the last two years and is now good. A much higher proportion of students is now working at or above their target grades than previously. However, on a significant minority of GCE AS courses and on some of the intermediate level provision, the proportion of students who successfully complete remains stubbornly below the national average.
- The proportion of adults who successfully complete their courses has improved significantly over the last three years. For much of this large and growing provision, success rates are either in line with the national average or, frequently, above it. For younger students, improvements are stronger on foundation and advanced provision. At intermediate level, progress has been slower and success rates overall were well below the national average last year, largely owing to the poor results for the large number of students entered for GCSE general studies, a subject which has now been dropped from the curriculum.
- The proportion of students successfully completing their GCE AS- and A-level programmes has risen significantly over the last three years and further progress is confirmed by the latest examination results published just prior to the inspection. However, in several important subjects, improvements have not been consistent and their results remain below the national average.
- This inconsistency is also reflected in how well students make progress in their GCE and advanced vocational studies compared to their attainment on entry. Students taking GCE A-level subjects often do better than would be predicted from their GCSE grades at the start of the course. Students taking GCE AS and advanced vocational courses make the progress that is expected of them, but significant variation exists between subjects. In some subjects students regularly make better progress than predicted; in others they do not achieve their full potential.
- The college has a large and successful programme of subcontracted work, much of it based locally and supporting work with students with disabilities. Success rates on this provision are high and students make good progress into employment or become much better equipped to live independently. Success rates in workplace learning programmes in childcare and the motor industry are also very high.

- Students are confident. They clearly enjoy their learning and their time at college. Parents of younger students confirm this view and are overwhelmingly supportive of the way the college helps their teenage children to develop the social skills they will need for their next step into employment or further study. Students are attentive and work hard in lessons. Most of them make good progress. The college's work with students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and with disaffected young people locally, successfully motivates these students and helps many of them to find employment or to move towards independence.
- Students are polite and courteous. They develop good study skills, work safely and collaborate well in pairs and in small groups in lessons. They get along well with each other and with their teachers. The college has a harmonious atmosphere. Most students go on to further and higher study and to employment when they leave the college.

<b>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	Good
---	------

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This is reflected in the good improvements to students' achievement and progress since the last inspection.
- Staff are well qualified, knowledgeable and set high standards for their students. They expect students to work hard in lessons and ensure that they enjoy their learning. Lessons are characterised by effective working relationships between teachers and students and between students and their peers. Teachers are well supported by a good range of staff development activities.
- The vast majority of lessons are well planned. Schemes of work show a clear insight into teaching and learning activities to be used and how students are to be assessed. Teachers show commitment and energy. They hold the interest of students, manage activities well and check that students understand and are learning.
- In a minority of lessons, a variety of issues detract from the quality of learning. In some lessons, planning is insufficiently detailed. In others, the lesson lacks pace or teachers talk too much and students are not sufficiently involved in thinking through their own answers to problems. Sometimes, students need to be given more time to reflect, evaluate and give their own response.
- Students' work is marked fairly and the students receive timely and encouraging feedback from their teachers. Much of this feedback explains clearly what students need to do to improve their work. In a few areas, feedback is less detailed and helpful and students need more guidance on how they can improve. Managers are now assessing the quality of teachers' marking more closely.
- The college has a careful and supportive approach to advising students which course to join. Interviews and a series of assessments are used and these have been further developed over the last two years. These new approaches have also contributed to the improved in-year attendance and retention as a higher proportion of students have been placed on courses which they enjoy.
- Staff provide a high level of care and support for students. Very good resources and specialist staff provide students with appropriate information, advice and guidance. These resources and staff are based in comfortable and accessible accommodation close to the refectory, and are valued by students. As well as offering good individual support for students, personal tutors also provide a well-planned tutorial programme throughout the year.
- Over the last two years, a new system has been introduced to monitor students' progress and attendance. This has involved the appointment of a new team of student progress officers who have proved to be highly effective. They work alongside teachers and tutors to ensure that students are attending lessons, completing their work and achieving the targets they have been set. This has proved very successful and is a key element in improving the achievements and progress of students over the last two years.

- While most of the learning targets that teachers agree with individual students are clear and measurable, some variation still exists. Some staff do not set targets for improvement that are sufficiently specific and measurable to help students to raise their academic attainment and reach their full potential.
- Students are strongly encouraged to become independent learners, making use of excellent facilities to support their development. The learning resource centre and other open access computer-based facilities are conducive to learning and provide ample access to computers. Students confirm that they are set work to complete independently and feel that the college supports them well to develop the necessary skills.
- Many good learning resources are in place on the college's computer network and in a number of subject areas, teachers and learners use these well. The college encourages teachers to share good practice in this area, but the network is not well used in all subject areas.
- The college environment is welcoming and inclusive, with mutual respect between staff and students, both in lessons and around the college. Teachers include explicit promotion of equality and diversity in many lesson plans and schemes of work. However, in many lessons the issues identified in the plans are not explored or expanded further. Teachers are missing opportunities to provide learners with a better understanding of these issues.

## Health, social care and sociology

### Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment in health, social care and sociology are good with outstanding features, and outcomes for learners are also good. The proportion of students successfully completing their courses has improved to above the national average. However, while students studying on GCE AS levels in sociology and health and social care make good progress compared to their qualifications on entry, on GCE A-level courses in these subjects their progress is satisfactory.
- Teachers set high standards for their students. Students work very productively with teachers and with each other in lessons. Lessons are very carefully planned. A wide range of well-chosen teaching and learning activities motivate and challenge students. In most lessons students develop good higher level skills of analysis and evaluation. For example, in a sociology lesson, students were able to discuss, compare and evaluate a wide range of sociological perspectives relating to issues of deviance. In a minority of lessons, insufficient time is allowed for students to develop their thoughts and ideas fully and to write complete notes.
- Teachers use their very good subject knowledge well to respond to students' questions in lessons and to generate interesting discussions. They ensure that students develop a good understanding of the health and social care sectors. Teachers skilfully support students in extending their knowledge and understanding of the protection of children and vulnerable adults, and equality and diversity, through the social care curriculum. However, work placement opportunities in health and social care, although they meet the minimum course requirements, do not provide sufficient experience for students to relate fully their college-based work to vocational settings and work environments.
- Teachers use good questioning techniques to confirm and extend students' knowledge and understanding. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not ensure that all students are included in the full class discussion. Teachers and students make very good use of computers and computer-based resources to support their teaching and learning.
- Assignments are carefully assessed. Students know what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers carefully correct spelling, punctuation and grammar, but some do not provide

sufficient summary feedback. For example, they do not summarise the overall strengths and consistently record the areas that need to be improved.

- Students receive timely and effective support to help them to improve their English skills. Learning support assistants and teachers work well as a team to ensure that students' needs are understood and met. While the development of literacy skills in lessons is very good, the development of students' numeracy skills is less effective.
- Tutorial support is very good and valued highly by the students. Tutors know their students well and provide them with very effective individual support and guidance. Targets set are carefully and clearly recorded and progress towards them carefully monitored. Tutors use the wider college support services and those in the community well to support students when necessary.
- Most students progress to higher education and related employment. Students are provided with accurate and timely information and are ably supported in their applications for appropriate courses and training programmes and into sustainable employment.

## Visual arts, media and communication

### Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and most of the current students are making good progress towards their qualification. In previous years the proportion of students successfully completing their qualifications, while improving well, has been low on a few courses. This year, more students have stayed on their courses, their attendance has improved and more of them are either meeting or exceeding their target grades.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good in visual arts, which forms around two thirds of the provision. In media and communication, teaching, learning and assessment require improvement.
- Lessons in visual arts are well planned. Good resources and stimulating activities motivate students well. As a result, they take part in lessons enthusiastically, and make good progress in developing their creativity and their ability to use specialist resources such as photo-manipulation software and photography equipment. In an outstanding photography lesson, the teacher carefully planned the resources and techniques the students would need to use low-light sources; the resulting photographs were experimental and exciting. Teachers plan and provide succinct, informative demonstrations supported by detailed worksheets that allow students to work independently.
- In less successful lessons, teachers explain too much to students instead of asking questions that encourage them to think for themselves and make creative decisions. In these lessons students are too passive and are not challenged sufficiently. In too many lessons, students are not sufficiently encouraged to develop their literacy skills. Teachers do not ensure that they plan and implement sufficient opportunities in lessons to promote understanding of equality and diversity among their students.
- Teachers ensure that students understand what aspects of each task they will be assessed on and how to meet the criteria. For example, in a GCE AS media lesson, students discussed the criteria they believe should be applied to assess a piece of work and then compared their suggestions to the criteria applied by the awarding body.
- Teachers provide regular feedback to students on their progress. Students' work is assessed promptly and feedback usually explains the reason for the grade awarded. Too often, however, the feedback provides insufficient guidance on how the students can improve the quality of their work. The college has improved the quality assurance of assessment on vocational courses in media, and teachers now share good practice to ensure standards of assessment are consistent.

- Students are set challenging grades to achieve. They understand where these grades come from and appreciate the chance to strive to achieve them. Regular tutorials are used well to review their progress towards these targets.
- A wide range of trips and community activities is used well to provide stimuli for students' own work. For example, graphic design students followed up a visit to Kew Gardens with a project to produce striking images using image manipulation software. Work with partner organisations, such as hospitals, a local radio station and community groups, develops students' employability and their personal and social skills well.
- Teachers work well together in visual arts to share good practice. For example, they have collaborated effectively to develop websites and digital resources which enable students to join digital communities of artists. A virtual learning environment (VLE) is used well in media and communications. Students enjoy using these resources and value the access they have to high quality resources and teachers' feedback.
- Students have a good understanding of the opportunities available to them once they have completed their course. Students in visual arts extend their understanding of the arts industries through a programme of workshops and talks from visiting artists. Many of them compete successfully in competitions.

### The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The Principal, governors and senior managers have a clear strategic vision for the college and understand their local community well. They bring enthusiasm and commitment to their work which their local partners recognise and value. They have led the improvement of the college since the last inspection by: ensuring that staff set high expectations for students; introducing effective systems to track students' progress; and continuing to develop the college's role as an excellent partner in its local community. These improvements are sustainable and have led to improved success rates and good teaching that better meets students' needs.
- Performance management arrangements are generally effective, but the various elements of the systems do not link together as coherently as they might. For example, the lesson observation system does not link clearly enough with the performance management and appraisal of teachers to inform senior managers what is needed in the staff development programme. These arrangements are not yet consistently improving teaching and learning across the whole college; in some areas, standards have yet to rise significantly.
- Self-assessment is understood by all staff. Self-assessment reports are systematically produced and include the subcontracted areas of work. Quality assurance has greatly improved and is supported by effective management information, ensuring that students' progress is monitored frequently and very closely. The self-assessment report is accurate, but does not focus sufficiently on the impact of improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. While most subject and course teams are tackling their weaker aspects and making good improvements, this was not the case in the small number of areas judged by the college to be less successful.
- Managers have developed carefully tailored programmes to ensure success for a wide range of local people with challenging backgrounds, including those with low skills and low ambitions. Consultation with partners and students informs these developments. The college has responded rapidly and well to changes in national priorities, with a coherent approach for enterprise and employability to help the most vulnerable. A well-designed and highly effective programme for young people who are not in education or employment is outstanding. The college, in partnership with a local university, is working to alleviate mental health problems experienced by some students as a part of a research project. The college's work with a local charity for adults with learning difficulties continues to provide excellent opportunities for them to move into employment or to live independently.
- Transition arrangements from school to college and onto employment and higher education are good. For example, the college works very well with local secondary schools to raise the level of

mathematical skills especially in male pupils. They have jointly appointed a specialist mathematics teacher to lead this work in schools and the college. The college's joint programme with secondary schools for able and talented students provides a leadership and management qualification for some older pupils. A joint programme with schools motivates students to study science.

- The college is an integral part of the community and promotes equality and diversity well both in-house and in the wider community. The proportion of students of minority ethnic heritage is twice as high in the college as in the local community. These students say that they find the college an attractive and welcoming place to study. There have been good improvements in the success rates of male students on GCE AS-level courses, an area where the college has seen underperformance in the past.
- The college meets its statutory requirements for keeping students safe, and students feel safe at college. Strong links with external agencies provide support for this work. Selected students work as mentors with their peers and are highly effective in countering, for example, cyber bullying. Their role has now been expanded through training to encompass support for any students who may have low self-esteem, or face loneliness and feelings of isolation.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

<b>Portsmouth College</b>						
<b>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</b>  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	<b>Overall</b>	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Other work-based learning	Employability	Community learning
	<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	2	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	<b>2</b>	2	2	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>2</b>	2	2	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>2</b>	2	2	2	2	2

<b>Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>Health and social care</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Social Sciences</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Visual Arts</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Media and communication</b>	<b>3</b>



## Provider details

Portsmouth College	
Type of provider	Sixth form college
Age range of learners	16-18
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 1193
	Part-time: 465
Principal/CEO	Steve Frampton
Date of previous inspection	May 2010
Website address	www.portsmouth-college.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
<b>Full-time</b>	68	146	133	18	707	67	6	0
<b>Part-time</b>	42	109	19	196	3	74	0	7
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	322							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Beneficial Foundation</li> <li>■ PHW Services (CTH) Ltd.</li> </ul>							

## Additional socio-economic information

Portsmouth College is a sixth form college located on the eastern edge of Portsmouth. The majority of students are full time and aged 16 to 18. A large and growing number of adults studies on predominantly part-time courses. The college offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses from foundation to advanced level, including provision for students with learning difficulties and subcontracted work for adults in the locality. The range and diversity of the curriculum have been developed over time to meet local community needs and are more typical of a small general further education college than a sixth form college. Students start at the college with generally lower levels of attainment than are usual for a sixth form college. The college holds a Beacon award for its partnership work with local schools. Portsmouth's schools do not have sixth forms. Six other colleges exist either within the city or in easy travelling distance, so students have a wide choice of places to study when they reach the age of 16 years.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Wilf Hudson HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the college's vice principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



Learner View is a new website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too.

To find out more go to [www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk) or if you have any questions about Learner View please email Ofsted at:

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and provider inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013